

Appl. No. 10/052,282
Amdt. dated July 18, 2006
Reply to Office Action of October 6, 2006

PATENT

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed October 6, 2006. Claims 2, 4, 16, 20, 21, and 42-49 were pending in the present application. Claims 45 and 46 are allowable. This Amendment amends claims 4, 20, 43, 45, and 47, and cancels claims 2 and 16, leaving pending in the application claims 4, 20, 21, and 42-49. Reconsideration of the rejected claims is respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 45 and 46 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 45 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, such that claim 45 and dependent claim 46 are in condition for allowance. The remaining claims as amended now depend, directly or indirectly, from allowable claim 45, such that the remaining claims also should be in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the objection to claims 45 and 46 be withdrawn and all pending claims be allowed.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103

Claims 2, 4, 16, 42, and 47-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by *Ashwin* (US 6,232,877). Claims 20 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being rendered obvious by *Ashwin* in view of *Francis* (US 6,600,418) and *Gordon* (US 6,567,486). Although Applicants do not agree with these rejections, for reasons including those of record, Applicants have canceled claims 2 and 16 and amended the remaining claims to depend from allowable claim 45, in order to expedite issuance of the allowable subject matter. As such, pending claims 4, 20, 21, 42, and 47-49 are in condition for allowance, and are not anticipated or rendered obvious by *Ashwin*, *Francis*, and/or *Gordon*, either individually or in any combination. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejections with respect to these claims be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

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III. Amendment to the Claims

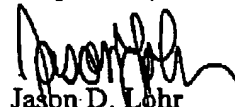
Unless otherwise specified, amendments to the claims are made for purposes of clarity, and are not intended to alter the scope of the claims or limit any equivalents thereof. The amendments are supported by the specification and do not add new matter.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 925-472-5000.

Respectfully submitted,


Jason D. Lohr
Reg. No. 48,163

TOWNSEND and TOWNSEND and CREW LLP
Two Embarcadero Center, Eighth Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-3834
Tel: 925-472-5000
Fax: 415-576-0300
Attachments
JDL:slh
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